

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

LIMITATIONS OF FREEDOM

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Madam Speaker, I have twice in my life been denied passage at a wall or fence with both times being a limitation of freedom.

On June 12, 1990, I was denied passage in Berlin at the Brandenburg Gate by an East German Communist guard directing me to Checkpoint Charlie at the junction of Friedrichstraße.

On February 25, 2021, I was denied passage in Washington at 2nd and C Street, which I have walked for 20 years, at a locked 12-foot fence topped with razor wire until a courageous Capitol Police Officer arrived to unlock the gate for me to be released from Capitol Hill confinement.

I appreciate the efforts of District of Columbia Delegate ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON to prevent permanent fencing surrounding Capitol Hill, which isolates legislators from constituents.

Unobtrusive security can be implemented and installed without abusing National Guard personnel who are dedicated in their service. As a 31-year Guard veteran and grateful Guard Dad of three members, I know firsthand of Guard commitment.

In conclusion, God Bless our Troops and we will never forget September 11th in the Global War on Terrorism.

REMEMBERING BARBARA LUBIN

HON. ANN KIRKPATRICK

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of my dear friend Barbara Lubin who passed away on February 6, 2021 at the age of 63 following a cancer diagnosis. No one knew Democratic politics in Arizona the way that she did, knowledge that she put to good use at the Arizona Democratic Party in the role of Operations Director. Barb had an extensive career in politics including her own run for the Arizona Corporation Commission and her service as the director of the Clean Elections Institute.

Barb was warm, kind, always ready to share a story or a meal, and most of all incredibly funny. She and her mother first talked me into running for the legislature when we were all living in Flagstaff, and I feel so grateful to have been so close to her and her family when I was representing that area. I want to extend my deepest condolences to Barb's husband Stanley, their daughter Jessica, their son-in-law James and their two granddaughters Abigail and Elizabeth, as well as the larger Arizona Democratic community who

loved her. Barb represented the best of Arizona, and her legacy will live on far beyond her.

HONORING RON WRIGHT

HON. MICHAEL T. McCAUL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. McCAUL. Madam Speaker, on February 7th, we were forced to say goodbye to my dear friend and fellow Representative, Ronald "Ron" Wright.

Throughout his long and distinguished career in public service, Ron inspired all with an unshakeable drive to make his community a better place. Ron was a committed Texan through and through, and among those values he held most dear were those of integrity and hard work.

Ron's jobs over the years reflect this. He spent his early years milking cows—on the family dairy farm, then proceeded to 30 years in business, working in construction, media, sales, and management. But throughout his time in the private sector, Ron couldn't quite shake a deeper desire to serve. He served on a number of boards and commissions, including the Tarrant County Historical Commission, the Arlington Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, the Mansfield Education Foundation board, the Arlington Sports Authority, and the Arlington Tomorrow Foundation.

In 2000, Ron made the permanent switch to public service when he was elected to the Arlington City Council. In this role, Ron fought to improve the lives of his fellow citizens. After serving 8 years on the City Council, Ron accepted an appointment to become the Tax Assessor-Collector of Tarrant County. He was later elected to a full term by the voters of Tarrant County, then re-elected to a four-year term in November 2016.

In 2018, Ron was elected by the constituents of Texas' 6th Congressional District to represent them in the U.S. House of Representatives. In this capacity, Ron fought to improve the lives of his fellow North Texans, and he served as a Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Education and Labor.

I had the opportunity to learn from Ron last Congress during our time on the Foreign Affairs Committee. In my conversations with Ron, I was struck by his wit, charm, and readiness to solve the problems affecting all Americans.

During his time in Congress—Ron, famous for his impeccable taste in bow ties, began every day with a smile on his face. He worked with everyone, looking past the bounds of party lines in his desire to find solutions for the American people. In 2019, Ron was diagnosed with lung cancer. In the face of this challenge Ron did not balk but maintained a rigorous work schedule and inspired us all with his fortitude and lasting sense of humor.

Ron was a fighter, a proven conservative, and a true statesman. The citizens of Texas' 6th District have lost a leader and we here in Congress have lost a dear friend. My heart goes out to Ron's wife, Susan, their three children, and their nine grandchildren. Ron Wright was a warrior, and someone who passionately fought for his constituents, for Texas, and for America—he will be missed.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE RESOLUTION EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY EACH YEAR AS "RARE DISEASE DAY"

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. CARSON. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to reintroduce this resolution with my colleague Rep. RICHARD HUDSON of North Carolina. Our resolution supports the designation of Rare Disease Day on the last day of February. I am pleased that this resolution has been endorsed by the National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) and am thankful for its leadership on these critical issues over many years.

Nearly one in ten Americans live with one or more of the roughly 7,000 known rare diseases. More than half of those struggling with rare diseases—defined as affecting less than 200,000 people—are children. Sadly, many rare diseases and conditions are serious, life-threatening, and lack effective treatments. These are not just statistics: I am sure most of us know at least one family member or friend who has been affected by or struggled with the unique challenges of rare diseases.

Moreover, as we observe Black History Month, it's important to know that African Americans and other minorities are especially vulnerable to rare diseases, including Sickle Cell Anemia and Sarcoidosis. These diseases and conditions—including Thalassemia and Hereditary ATTR (hATTR) amyloidosis—disproportionately affect African Americans. Despite these unique obstacles, African Americans have an inspiring tradition of both combatting rare diseases and improving medical science.

One great example is Dr. Charles Drew, an African American scientist who helped found the modern "blood bank," which helped dramatically expand blood transfusions. A faculty member at Howard University, Dr. Drew's pioneering work in blood transfusions took place against the backdrop of segregation and discrimination. During his time overseeing the Red Cross's blood plasma donation program, Dr. Drew was prohibited from donating his own blood because of the color of his skin. Despite these obstacles, Dr. Drew's work improved the practice of blood transfusions, which is now a lifeline for many individuals struggling today with rare diseases. The examples of Dr. Drew and countless other researchers, physicians, nurses, activists, and

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

patients underscore the importance of bringing additional awareness to rare diseases.

Despite the many challenges, some progress has been made. More than 840 drugs and biologics have been approached by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of rare diseases. However, Congress must do more to combat rare diseases. In addition, more work needs to be done to bring attention to the needs of those who struggle with rare diseases, and to celebrate their courage. That's why Rep. HUDSON and I are reintroducing this important resolution. Each year, many individuals with rare diseases and their loved ones celebrate Rare Disease Day to share their stories and educate communities of researchers, health professionals, governments, and community organizations about how rare diseases affect them.

In 2019, more than 100 countries observed Rare Disease Day. Our resolution expresses support for the designation of the last day of this month as Rare Disease Day. Congress should recognize this work and improve our efforts to address the challenges facing the rare disease patient community.

Madam Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join us in supporting Rare Disease Day's designation on the last day of February to better champion people with rare diseases. I urge the House to support this resolution.

HONORING THE LIFE OF ROBERT EASTERN CARL, JR.

HON. BRIAN BABIN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. BABIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of a community leader and friend, Robert Eastern Carl, Jr., who passed away on Saturday, February 20, 2021, at the age of 90. Robert was a longtime resident of Tyler County and had the respect of all who knew him.

Robert was born on July 17, 1930, in Camden, Texas, to Estelle Miller Carl and Robert Eastern, Sr. As a young adult, he was called to aid his country in the United States Army and fought in the Korean War. Following his time in the military, he returned to Tyler County and went to work as a rigger for Texaco. While employed by Texaco, he dutifully served as Board President of the Texaco Credit Union for 15 years. After his years of service, he began his well-deserved retirement. Robert was the man to call whenever you needed anything fixed. No matter who called, he never hesitated to come to the aid of his fellow man. Robert was devoted to his family and loved the Lord with all his heart, soul, and mind. He was a faithful member of First Baptist Church of Woodville and a dedicated deacon for many years. In his spare time, he also enjoyed hunting and fishing with friends and loved ones.

Robert is survived by the love of his life and wife of 66 years, Gay Carl of Woodville; daughter, Debbie Darville and husband, Roy, of Marshall; sons, Keith Carl and his wife, Lori, of Port Neches and Kevin Carl and his wife, Peggy, of Buna; brother, James Carl of Nederland; sisters, Eunice Vinson of Chester and Ann Adkinson and her husband, Ira, of Porter; grandchildren, Brian Darville, Andrew Darville and his wife, Heather, Mattie Riu and

her husband, Tim, Michael Carl and his wife, Laura, Alison Carl, Emily Carl, Amy Tallerita and her husband, Beau, Zachary Carl and his wife, Channing, Seth Carl, Chloe Carl, Sophie Carl, Jonathan Carl and his wife, Jessica, and Matthew Carl and his wife, Melissa; great grandchildren, Kyson Darville, Blake Darville, Emerald Riu, Felix Riu, Annette Carl, and Charlotte Carl; and special friend, Jimmy Telford. He is preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Estelle Carl; brother, Earnest Lee Carl; and sisters, Joyce Best and Rita Chandler.

Madam Speaker, I honor my friend Robert Eastern Carl, Jr., for his faithful service to his community. My thoughts and prayers remain with his family and friends during this difficult time.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ELRETA MELTON ALEX- ANDER-RALSTON

HON. G.K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, in celebration of Black History Month, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of Elreta Melton Alexander—an educator, barrier breaker, civil rights advocate, and renowned officer of the court. She was the first Black woman in North Carolina to be licensed and practice as a lawyer, to argue before its Supreme Court, and to be elected a judge.

Elreta Narcissus Melton was born on March 21, 1919, in the small eastern North Carolina town of Smithfield. Her father, Joseph C. Melton, a Baptist minister and teacher, and her mother, Alian A. Reynolds Melton, a schoolteacher, had strong beliefs about the importance of education and refused to perpetuate the narratives of racial injustice. The family later moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, where in 1937, at the age of eighteen, Alexander graduated from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical College, now North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, with a Bachelor of Science degree in music. Upon graduation, she became a high-school teacher in South Carolina where she taught music, math, and history.

Encouraged by a Greensboro minister, Alexander decided to attend law school and pursue a legal career. Because of the limitations for Black student admittance into law schools in North Carolina, Alexander applied and was the first Black woman admitted to Columbia Law School in 1943 at the age of twenty-four, and became the first Black woman to graduate from Columbia Law School in 1945. In 1947, after passing the North Carolina bar exam, Alexander became the first Black woman to practice law in North Carolina. After establishing a large solo criminal practice in Greensboro, Alexander formed one of the first integrated law firms in the South, Alston, Alexander, Pell & Pell. During her career as a trial attorney, she added to her list of "firsts" when she became the first Black woman to argue before the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

On December 2, 1968, Alexander became the first Black judge elected in North Carolina and the first Black woman in the United States to be elected district court judge. Alexander

was re-elected in 1972, 1976 and 1980. One of her most notable accomplishments as a District Court Judge was her innovative juvenile sentencing approach called "Judgment Day", which focused on rehabilitating young offenders and misdemeanants as an alternative to sentencing. Judge Alexander ran for the Republican nomination for the Chief Justice position on the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1974. Battling persistent racism in the state, she lost the election to a White man named James Newcomb, a fire extinguisher salesman with no college degree or legal background. However, her loss prompted a later-adopted constitutional amendment requiring judges to first be attorneys licensed in North Carolina before they can rightfully hold the position as judge. Her presence in the courtroom brought about great change and needed perspective; however, she did not win every battle and every election. Despite the perception of defeat, the barriers that Alexander faced laid the groundwork and opened doors for a better tomorrow.

While Alexander faced many challenges throughout her educational pursuit and legal career, she refused to let her circumstances define her destiny as she forged her own path led by her passion and conviction for justice and equality.

On behalf of the United States House of Representatives and the people of the First District of North Carolina, I am proud to recognize and celebrate the life and legacy of a true pioneer and Black History icon, Elreta Melton Alexander-Ralston.

HONORING THE CAREERS OF BILL AND JANE FOX

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. KATKO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Bill and Jane Fox of Fox Dealerships in Central New York as they settle into well-deserved retirements. For nearly fifty years, Bill and Jane, siblings and co-owners of Fox Dealerships, have operated a thriving local business and demonstrated great generosity and care for the community they serve.

Growing up in Manheim, Pennsylvania, Bill and Jane gained an early appreciation for the automotive industry by spending their summers working with their father, a used car wholesaler. In 1976, Jane purchased her first auto dealership in Weedsport, New York, while her brother practiced law in Syracuse. Jane became one of the first female dealers in the Northeast and established herself as a leader in the industry. In 1979, Bill left his law firm to grow the family brand with the purchase of a second dealership in Auburn, New York. Over 40 years, Bill and Jane expanded their business, owning as many as 14 dealerships, and becoming a household name in Central New York.

Across Central New York, the Fox family has also become well-known for philanthropy and investment in the community. Local schools, hospitals, and charities have all benefited from both Bill and Jane's time and resources. The siblings have also always shared a strong commitment to hiring local workers and promoting them to senior positions.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in recognizing Bill and Jane Fox. Together, they have made a tremendous impact in our region through their business and efforts to give back to the community. I wish them both the best in their retirements.

HONORING OLIVIA SAMPLES AS
IOWAN OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding member of our community, Olivia Samples, by nominating her as our Iowan of the week. Olivia is a certified doula and small business owner, focused on providing quality services to families as they prepare for prenatal, childbirth and postnatal care. Three years ago, Olivia read an article about the maternal health crisis and felt a deep calling to put her skills to good use. While Iowa has amongst some of the lowest stillbirth rates in the country, Black people are twice as likely to experience stillbirth than the general population. To put that into perspective, 1 in 121 Black people will experience a stillbirth as compared to the 1 out of 234 white people. The mortality rate is unfortunately just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to birthing and new parenting issues that face Iowa's Black community. These stats along with the lower quality prenatal care that was being provided to Black women in the community inspired Olivia to become Iowa's first Black doula.

Olivia leads her business, Kismet Doula Services, with the mission to cultivate collective care and liberation to her clients through providing them a safe, loving environment to ensure they can become and remain healthy and well. Her services include prenatal, childbirth, lactation consultation and postnatal support for her clients. However, Olivia goes above and beyond for her clients, going as far as to help with laundry, prepare meals for them and secure funds for those who need assistance purchasing necessary items for postnatal care and parenthood. She strives to make sure her services are accessible to all by providing mutual aid options, free services through certain organizations and will even barter or trade with her clients.

Beyond providing direct support to her clients, Olivia also organizes workshops and partners with several community organizations. In her first few years as a doula, she realized that the voices of new parents were missing when it came time to discuss legislation that would affect their well-being. As a result, Olivia organized the Celebration of Black Kin Conference for this April focusing on Black maternal well-being in our community. Olivia also gives back to the community by partnering with the Young Women's Resource Center to provide free doula services as well as the Iowa Queer Communities of Color Coalition to ensure all types of families are able to receive the quality pre and postnatal services they deserve.

Olivia jumps in headfirst to solve the problem and gives it her all. The success of her business and the high praise from her commu-

nity reflect the significant impact she has had on the lives of pregnant people in Iowa. That's why I would like my colleagues to rise with me and recognize this exemplary woman, Olivia Samples, as Iowan of the Week.

HONORING DR. CAROLYN PASS
FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Dr. Carolyn Pass was born in Lake Wales, Florida. She earned a B.S. in microbiology from the University of Florida and an M.D. from the University of Miami. She completed an internship and residency in internal medicine at the George Washington University.

Her leadership spans more than 35 years beginning with serving as the president of the Minority PreProfessional Association at UF. As a medical student, she was a student health policy mentee in the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy's office. Also, she served as president and regional council member of the Student National Medical Association. In her senior year she was awarded the highest honor bestowed at the University of Miami by being inducted into Iron Arrow Honor Society.

Dr. Pass' dedication to community began in 2001 when she opened her primary care practice in Lake Wales. Before going into solo practice, she suffered from congestive heart failure and recuperated at home for 18 months after giving birth to her third child.

Her dedication to providing quality care to her patients continued to flourish as she rose through the ranks of leadership at Advent Health Lake Wales. While on staff for the past 20 years, she's served on every committee and has been elected three times as chairman of medicine. Currently, she is serving as the first Black female chief of staff.

Dr. Pass' specialties include internal medicine, wound care and hyperbaric medicine.

Her passions are her three lovely children. Alexandra is a graduate student, and Nicholas and Christian are in college.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MR.
RUSS THYRET

HON. TED LIEU

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. LIEU. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the life of Mr. Russ Thyret, who passed away at the age of 76 on February 12, 2021 at his home in Valley Village, California. Over the course of thirty years, Russ rose through the ranks at Warner Bros. Records culminating in his serving as the Burbank-based label's Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer from 1995 to 2001. His wife, Rebecca, said that Russ' message for his Warner family and for all who he had known over the years, "he wants us all to be happy and to be good to each other."

Mr. Thyret, the son of a Glendale, California policeman, began his career in the music industry managing an independent retail store

on the Sunset Strip. He joined Warner Bros. Records shortly thereafter, working at the company's Burbank home office in a national sales role during the time Warner/Elektra/Atlantic (WEA) Corporation opened branch operations throughout the country. In the mid-70s, Russ was selected to serve as Vice President and Director of National Promotion during the time Warner Bros. dominated the charts and became the dominant record company on the West Coast.

Russ was named Board Chairman at Warner Bros. after a period of uncertainty after the departure of several senior executives. He sought to strengthen the record label with his unique business strategy and his undying passion for music. During his years heading the company's promotion department, Russ led a small army of promotional personnel who worked to ensure records were played on the air on local, national, and international airwaves. Mr. Thyret and his staff delivered countless hits by legendary artists such as: Fleetwood Mac, the Doobie Brothers, Randy Newman, James Taylor, Alice Cooper, Chaka Khan, R.E.M., ZZ Top, Depeche Mode, k.d. lang, John Fogerty, Madonna, and Prince.

"Thyret was a man of great instinct and heart," as stated by Jackie Sallow with Warner Records. Russ will always be remembered for his personable spirit, tenacious mindset, and kind heart. In 2001, Mr. Thyret ended his tenure after the completion of the AOL Time Warner merger. He summed up his time with the company stating, "My strongest ambition has always been to serve the artists well, and I leave Warner Bros. hoping I have accomplished that. I was in awe of Warner Bros. Records the first day I walked in the door, and in so many ways, I leave even more in awe. It will forever be a magical memory."

Mr. Russ Thyret will also be remembered for his love of his family, horses, fishing, and his great Labrador Retriever. He is survived by his wife Rebecca Alvarez and his son Russ Thyre, Jr.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF
JUDGE HUGH SCOTT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life of a trailblazer in the Western New York legal community, Judge Hugh B. Scott. Judge Scott possessed a great legal mind and he will be sorely missed by all those who loved and respected him.

Judge Hugh B. Scott defied societal attitudes meant to restrict him and other African Americans to become the first Black federal judge in Western New York history. After he graduated as one of just three Black members of the Sweet Home High School class of 1967, Judge Scott attended Niagara University and the University at Buffalo law school, once again as one of the few Black graduates, to make local legal history.

Judge Scott made history as the first African American federal prosecutor and head of the state attorney general's office in Buffalo. He served as a City Court judge for a decade before becoming the first Black federal judge in Western New York history in 1994.

In an interview with the Buffalo News following his appointment, Judge Scott humbly remarked of his accomplishments, "I try not to talk of it in those terms. But yes, there have been a number of firsts in my life, and yes, I'm proud of it." Judge Scott didn't like to dwell on his accomplishments; he was always looking to contribute to more than his résumé. Though he often downplayed his own role in breaking down barriers and deflected credit for helping others do the same, that only added to Judge Scott's authenticity, which was as noticeable in his courtroom as his gavel.

Outside of the courtroom, Judge Scott's presence was felt in the talks he gave to Buffalo kids who would benefit not just from his words but from the ceilings he broke through for the betterment of himself and for others. In addition to his informal community involvement, he also served as a board member on the National Conference for Community and Justice and the Buffalo Urban League. The life member of the NAACP was connected to the fight for justice in his hometown, where he met his wife Trudy and raised two sons, while also committing to the same struggle in education and the legal profession.

Madam Speaker, thank you for this time to honor the trailblazing legacy of Judge Hugh Scott. He embodied the passion, energy, and commitment to cause that makes Buffalo unique. We will forever be grateful for his outstanding service and leadership. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Trudy and his two sons and the many friends and family. I offer my thanks to Judge Scott for his incredible contributions to the fabric of our community and offer my condolences to his family for the passing of a man known to the legal system as a judge but known to people as a husband, father, trailblazer, and role model.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOBOKEN VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE CORPS

HON. ALBIO SIRE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. SIRE. Madam Speaker, our country is reeling from a pandemic that has left over half a million people dead, caused millions to lose their jobs, and forced millions more to stay home. Throughout the past year of strife, one group of people has carried the burden of the pandemic in order to protect our communities. Our nation's first responders have continued to put themselves in harm's way to care for others.

I applaud all the brave first responders in New Jersey's 8th District; our brave policemen, firefighters, and healthcare workers, but I would like to give special mention to the Hoboken Volunteer Ambulance Corps. This all volunteer ambulance corps marks their 50th anniversary on Sunday, February 28, 2021. For 50 years the volunteers of this unit have served as a volunteer Emergency Management Services (EMS) unit and have covered most of Hoboken's calls for ambulance and EMS services.

There are 150 volunteers in this corps, with 10 ambulances and emergency vehicles field-

ing over 5,000 emergency calls each year, and over 400,000 total since their founding. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, volunteers from the corps have been working tirelessly to continue providing emergency services and transportation to the residents of Hoboken even in the face of a severe health crisis. This exemplifies the commitment that these volunteers have to their community, striving to help others even when presented with grave challenges.

The Hoboken Volunteer Ambulance Corps has maintained their commitment to excellence prior to COVID-19 as well. In 2012, when the deadly superstorm Sandy ravaged most of New Jersey and the Northeast, the Corps jumped into action despite sustaining damage to their headquarters and multiple vehicles. They helped evacuate patients from Hoboken University Medical Center, which was damaged by flooding, and establish a field hospital in the gym of Stevens Institute of Technology.

These are two notable examples of the heroism displayed by the Hoboken Volunteer Ambulance Corps, but there are countless other stories outlining their positive impact on our community. As the corps celebrates 50 years of service, I commend them for the important work they do in our community. Hoboken, Hudson County, myself, and countless others across the 8th District thank them for their service and dedication, and look forward to the next 50 years of service they will provide to our grateful community.

HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF RUSSELL GRAY

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. COURTNEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to mourn the passing of a humble, loyal, and dedicated public servant, Russell Mason Gray of Sterling, Connecticut, who passed unexpectedly, at age 76, on January 12, 2021.

A resident and the First Selectman of the town of Sterling, Connecticut for 16 years, Russell prioritized the wellbeing of Sterling and its citizens above all else. Before being called to public service, Russell and his wife Sue dedicated themselves to their family dairy farm, and Russell, at his core was a farmer, with strong ties to his land. These ties created a natural transition to his election as First Selectman in 2005.

Russell's steadfast leadership helped Sterling, a small community of less than 4,000 people, navigate the challenges of being a rural municipality. From building four new bridges in town and constantly inspecting roads—to facilitating the construction of the new Sterling Community School and moving the town offices and Library to the former Sterling Memorial School in Oneco—Russell was proactive in securing an efficient but accessible municipal infrastructure for the town of Sterling. Alongside his commitment to Sterling, Russell was Chairman of the Windham County Soil and Water Conservation District, President of the Windham County Farm Bureau, Advisor to Killingly High School Vo-Ag,

Director of Patrons Mutual Insurance Company, President of the CT State Grange, County and Ekonk Community Granges, and Chairman of the Northeast Council of Governments. These commitments reflect only a portion of Russell's legacy and display not only Russell's dedication to Sterling but to all the towns in Windham County.

Russell's love for his town and the people in his community is known to all he encountered. His fellow selectman Lincoln Cooper once said, "He was stubborn and loyal—he loved this town. He was a self-made man whose stubbornness led him to make good decisions for Sterling." His former administrative assistant, Joyce Gustavson, emphasized that for Russell—"it was family first, then Sterling." Everyone who worked close with Russell saw the passion in his daily work at the town hall and his willingness to go above and beyond for every resident. Losing Russell leaves a deep void in eastern Connecticut.

Madam Speaker, knowing of Russell's devotion to the people of eastern Connecticut and Sterling and how diligently he served until his last breath, I can attest that his career represents the best of public service. I hope the chamber will join me in expressing the deepest condolences on behalf of the House of Representatives to the Gray family—his wife Sue; His children Rebecca, Mason, Deborah; and his grandchildren and great grandchildren. I hope this testament to Russell's life serves as an acknowledgement of the immeasurable debt of gratitude owed to him by the American people.

REMEMBERING ALBERT HALE

HON. ANN KIRKPATRICK

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mrs. KIRKPATRICK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of a former colleague and friend of mine, Albert Hale, who passed away February 2, 2021 at the age of 70 following complications from COVID-19.

Many in this chamber may not know who Albert Hale was, but he helped build and advocate for the Navajo Nation throughout his time in public service. As the Nation's second president, he worked tirelessly to advocate for sovereignty of the Diné, secure their rights, and address the needs of his constituents. As one of the first lawyers from the Nation, Mr. Hale was instrumental in advocating for the rights of the Diné and getting them the resources they needed to thrive.

Albert was a great friend of mine and an even greater leader for his community. We served together in the Arizona Legislature and his work consistently inspired me. I also fondly remember the Navajo Nation's parades, where Albert would always fearlessly ride on horseback, while I and others would be nearby on foot. I want to extend my deepest condolences to Albert's wife Paula, his daughters Sherri, Sheena, and Janelle, and his son Tony. Albert will be sorely missed, but his belief in and work for a brighter future in his community will endure.

IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MICHAEL
HAND

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Madam Speaker, it is my honor to recognize Michael Hand before the United States House of Representatives in recognition of his retirement as Assistant Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC). Mr. Hand, a Philadelphia native, has led a remarkable career defined by his ardent and diligent service to union members nationwide.

Originally from the River Ward section of Philadelphia, commonly called the Flat Iron, Mr. Hand earned his start in the labor community as member of Local Union 1050, serving on its Executive Board in numerous capacities for nearly 30 years. Prior to being appointed to his leadership role at the Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters, Mr. Hand served as one of the EASRCC's Senior Area Managers, expertly assisting the organization and its 40,000 members in Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., West Virginia, and 10 North Carolina counties.

Throughout his accomplished and lengthy career as a skilled carpenter, Mr. Hand was involved in construction projects at some of Philadelphia's most well-known institutions, including at the University of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia International Airport, Luken Steel, the Philadelphia Convention Center, and Liberty II, among others.

While Mr. Hand no longer resides in Philadelphia, he continues to selflessly give back to our community through his involvement with the "Carpenters Who Care" program, that helps carpenters struggling with addiction, and through his volunteer work with the Center of Support for Children's Advocates and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals (SPCA).

I wish Mr. Hand and his family the best in their future endeavors. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending our sincerest appreciation to Michael Hand for his extraordinary contributions to our society.

HONORING SADIE DELICATH AND
HER OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS
TO BLACK HISTORY
MONTH

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Ms. DeLAURO. Madam Speaker, February is Black History month. This month, and every month, let us celebrate the Black Americans who built this nation, amplify the voices of those who continue to fight for a more just society, and recommit to taking real action. We must remember that Black History is American History as we reflect on the people who have strengthened our nation.

This past year, the fight for racial justice was especially important in wake of unspeakable tragedies like the murders of George

Floyd and Breonna Taylor. People of all ages protested from coast to coast, calling for justice, saying enough is enough, and demanding change. I was particularly inspired by a group of young students led by Social Studies Teacher Nicole Clark, English Language Arts Teacher Monica Powell, and Inclusion Specialist Courtney Legg at Two Rivers Public Charter School in Washington, D.C.—where my granddaughter Sadie Delicath attends. During their recent school showcase they presented their "resistance poems" which I have shared with my colleagues in an e-booklet and posted to my website at:

<https://delauro.house.gov/sites/delauro.house.gov/files/documents/TwoRiversPoems.pdf>.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." During these unprecedented times, where we are also struggling to combat a pandemic that is disproportionately affecting communities of color, we must have the courage to make meaningful change. It is clear that the young authors of these poems certainly have that courage. I was particularly inspired by their words, and I am confident that my colleagues in the Congress were as well.

It is through their dedication and commitment of young people—and that of so many others before them—we are able to continue this fight for equality, justice and opportunity today and for many years to come.

I would like to share the poem written by my granddaughter Sadie. I am inspired by her every day:

CHANGE NEEDS TO COME

(By Sadie Delicath)

Do you know what it's like to be a Black person in America?

'Cause I don't.

I don't look at the tv and see another brother, mother, daughter, or father hanging from a tree or getting shot in her sleep wondering if next time it will be me.

Do you know what it's like to be a white person in America? 'Cause I do.

When I see a cop car there are no butterflies dancing in my stomach or the sinking feeling something bad is going to happen.

Is that how everyone feels, or just me?

Do you know what it's like to be a white person in America? 'Cause I do.

Having privilege because of the color of my skin, being protected by something I'm born in.

History is a broken record, skips a couple of times, but always repeats itself.

Our laws and our norms always find a way to keep racism around.

Slavery led to Jim Crow and Jim Crow to police brutality

We have the power to put an end to this pain, but Black people are silenced as if by thunderous rain.

Denouncing racism is not enough, a black square is not enough, do you really care or is it just a bluff?

Black Lives Matter is not a trend, we have to put racism to an end.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PUBLIC
BUILDINGS RENEWAL ACT OF 2021

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I introduced the Public Buildings Renewal Act of 2021. This legislation will spur private investment in public building infrastructure throughout the United States by creating \$5 billion in Private Activity Bonds for the development of government-owned public buildings. Critically, this legislation intends that these bonds are compliant with Davis-Bacon labor standards.

In every American community, there are serious concerns about the condition of our schools, public hospitals, justice facilities, universities, and libraries. With state and local budgets becoming increasingly strained, officials have chosen to save money by steadily reducing capital investment in public buildings. But years of underinvestment have led to facilities that are inadequately maintained, fail to comply with current codes or disability requirements, and do not have adequate security—endangering the public. Throughout the country, the average public school building is at least 40 years old, and the current backlog of maintenance and repair projects adds up to more than \$45 billion annually in unmet funding needs. It is past time that we upgrade our public buildings to provide a safe, modern, and efficient experience from coast to coast.

Presently, the use of public-private partnerships to develop government owned public buildings is restricted because, unlike transportation projects, public buildings are not currently eligible for Private Activity Bonds. This unnecessary impediment prevents public building from combining tax-exempt financing with private, taxable financing, resulting in lower project costs for our state and local governments. The Public Buildings Renewal Act adds public buildings as a new class of projects eligible for financing with Private Activity Bonds, allowing state and local governments to invest in public building infrastructure projects more easily. Once enacted, state and local governments would be able to enter long-term contracts with a private sector company to design, build, finance, and/or operate and maintain the building for a defined period. This legislation is intended to provide an additional financing option to state and local governments looking to improve their public buildings, not be a panacea for all projects.

We can no longer accept schools and hospitals in disrepair, deferred maintenance, and delayed capital investment. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and Senate to include this legislation in an infrastructure investment package.

HONORING STEPHEN M.
CULPOVICH'S SERVICE

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Ms. PINGREE. Madam Speaker, today we honor Stephen M. Culpovich, who is retiring

after serving Maine communities as a Postmaster for three decades.

Steve has dedicated his career to public service, serving in the U.S. Air Force before working twenty-two years as a Postmaster in Round Pond, then eight years in Rockport. As a public servant, Steve continuously went above and beyond, greeting each customer with a smile and good cheer.

Steve's retirement today is all the more remarkable because he originally intended to retire in March 2020. But as the world fell into chaos due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Steve made the courageous decision to stay on the job. Even though it meant working long days, a daily two-hour round-trip commute, and risking his safety, Steve refused to abandon his community during the most uncertain days of the pandemic.

It is because of people like Steve that Maine has a reputation for being "the way life should be." Our state is a much better place because of his vital work and his ability to form deep and trusting relationships with the people of Midcoast Maine. As he moves onto his next adventure, I wish him all the best.

REINTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO HUMANITARIAN AND SPORTING LEGEND MUHAMMAD ALI

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. CARSON. Madam Speaker, as we mark Black History Month, I am proud to reintroduce legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Muhammad Ali in recognition of his contributions to our nation. I believe it is long past time to recognize an American civil rights activist and sporting legend with Congress' highest honor. Unfortunately, Congress failed to act before The Champ's death in 2016, at the age 74, so I ask my colleagues to join me now in honoring an American hero. Over the course of his illustrious career, Muhammad Ali produced some of our nation's most lasting sports memories. From winning a Gold Medal at the 1960 Summer Olympics, to lighting the Olympic torch at the 1996 Summer Olympics, his influence as an athlete and a humanitarian spanned over fifty years.

Despite having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in the 1980s, Ali devoted his life to charitable organizations. Ali, and his wife Lonnie, were founding directors of the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center and Movement Disorders Clinic in Phoenix, AZ and helped raise over \$50 million for Parkinson's research. In addition to helping families cope with illness, Ali led efforts to provide meals for the hungry and helped countless organizations such as the Make-A-Wish-Foundation and the Special Olympics.

Muhammad Ali's humanitarian efforts went beyond his charitable activities in the United States. In 1990 Muhammad Ali travelled to the Middle East to seek the release of American and British hostages that were being held as human shields in the first Gulf War. After his intervention, 15 hostages were freed. Thanks to his devotion to diplomatic causes and racial harmony, Ali was the recipient of many acco-

lades, including being chosen as a "U.N. Messenger of Peace" in 1998 and receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005 from President Bush.

Through his unyielding dedication to his sport and to struggling populations around the world, Muhammad Ali still serves an example of service and self-sacrifice for generations of Americans. The Congressional Gold Medal is a fitting commemoration of his life and work, for which he is deservedly known as "the Greatest."

Madam Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in recognizing one of our nation's most lasting and influential figures by signing on to this important legislation.

CONGRATULATING MR. ROBBIN KUDER FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE AS A MINISTER AT NORTHWOODS CHURCH

HON. DANIEL WEBSTER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. WEBSTER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to recognize Pastor Robbin Kuder, and his wife Gail for their lifelong commitment to service in their community. This month, Pastor Kuder will retire after nearly a half-century of faithfully ministering to the residents of Tallahassee, Florida. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his and his wife Gail's service to Floridians, including the Central Florida community.

Raised in Orlando, the son of a minister, Robbin's commitment to service began in 1971 when he joined the United States Navy, where he served as an Operation Specialist. Following his graduation from FSU School of Music Education, Robbin began serving as worship leader and minister at Northwoods Church. He has served here for 45 years, including 16 years as youth minister.

I first met Robbin as we were young men attending First Baptist Church of Pine Hills, Florida where Robbin's dad Roger, served as music minister. As a newly elected member of the Florida Legislature, while in Tallahassee, I attended then University Heights Baptist Church where Robbin served.

A man of quiet leadership, immense patience and quiet sense of humor, Robbin has devoted his life to sharing his passion for music and the love of Christ with people. When not at church, Robbin could be found cycling, sailing, hunting or fishing—usually joined by his beloved wife Gail, one of his seven children or 16 grandchildren. His adventurous spirit and patience are evident in the numerous cross-state cycling trips he organized and led to give Florida youths an outlet for both athletics and adventure, while blessing churches with musical performances and service projects throughout the trip. Robbin and Gail are excellent examples for adults, parents, and young people for how to live a life of ministry.

It is a privilege to congratulate and applaud Robbin and Gail for a lifetime service that has spanned 5 decades. May their character, life, and efforts inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER TOBI OJO

HON. A. DONALD McEACHIN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. McEACHIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the exemplary work of Tobi Ojo, an 11th grade student at Grassfield High School in Chesapeake, Virginia, and the high school winner of the Black History Month essay contest I hosted earlier this month. Ms. Ojo wrote a powerful essay on Stacey Abrams' groundbreaking electoral successes and the exceptional work of African-American women across our nation. I am inspired by Ms. Ojo's words, and I encourage young people across our country to reflect on what this month means to them.

Since its creation less than 50 years ago, Black History Month has been a time to honor and reflect upon the remarkable achievements of the African-American community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Tobi Ojo's exceptional work in celebration of Black History Month.

February is the month to celebrate black history, accomplishments, and excellence. When thinking of historical figures who embody these ideologies, many individuals would mention Martin Luther King Jr. or Rosa Parks. If neither of these historical figures is mentioned most people would say another popular African-American man. Black excellence in terms of African-American women is hardly recognized. One African-American lady who has been currently seen breaking societal expectations is politician and lawyer, Stacey Abrams.

Mrs. Abrams broke history by being the first black woman to be a major party nominee for governor in the United States. She was a former liberal State House leader who wanted to change the historically conservative state of Georgia. Her campaign was centered on "the Georgia of tomorrow." Although she is not currently the governor of Georgia, no woman has ever come close to holding that position. Moreover, there has not been a governor position held by a black individual since the Reconstruction Era.

Stacey Abrams is also a successful graduate from Yale Law School. Outside of politics, Mrs. Abrams runs a small business and is a successful writer. Most of her successful books, such as *Minority Leader: Lead From Outside and Our Time Is Now*, center around her struggles and achievements in her life. These books inspire others like Mrs. Abrams to break societal standards set to hinder black lives in America.

Instead of allowing her race and gender to become a hindrance, Mrs. Abrams continues to strive to make a change in the state of Georgia. Georgia has had a history of black representation in small positions but not in statewide positions. Abrams continues to work to improve black communities in Georgia. One of her top priorities is to see more black women leaders in government positions (*The New York Times* 2021).

Stacey Abrams is also a voting rights activist who fights for Americans to have their voice heard through their votes. After seeing the massive mismanagement of Georgia's 2018 election, she decided to combat this problem. This was one of the reasons why she founded the Fair Fight. The Fair Fight helps educate voters on election reforms and advocate for election reform on various government levels. This organization promotes fair

elections by encouraging fair elections in Georgia. Fair Fight focuses on empowering the voices of minorities and diminishing voter suppression (About Fair Fight/Fair Fight" 2020).

Fair Fights was one of the many organizations that Stacey Abrams founded. In 2019, Fair Count was created. Fair Count was established to increase civic engagement in states and improve Census accuracy. Another organization that was created by Stacey Abrams is Southern Economic Advancement Project. The Southern Economic Advancement Project promotes public policies that improve economic power and increase equity in the South.

Stacey Abrams seeks to create change outside of Georgia and the United States. She is a member of former Secretary of State John Kerry's World War Zero bipartisan coalition which tries to educate individuals on climate change. Stacey Abrams has met with politicians in Taiwan, South Korea, Israel to bring about change on different issues worldwide ("About Stacey Abrams/Fair Fight" 2021).

Politician and writer, Stacey Abrams, has won awards that shine her accomplishments and works. She was a recipient of John F. Kennedy New Frontier Award. Stacey Abrams continues to break history day by day by fighting for those who do not have a voice and representation in government policies and positions.

TRIBUTE TO MR. EDWARD WILLIAM HILL

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I rise with respect to honor the life of Mr. Edward William Hill.

Edward was born to the union of Johnnie Edward and Mary Frances Hill on November 12, 1957 at Provident Hospital in Chicago, IL.

His friends and family knew him as "Sputnik", a nickname given to him by his father as he was born after the launch of the world's first space satellite.

Edward accepted Christ at an early age, and was baptized at Vernon Baptist Church. He later became a member of Lilydale First Baptist Church, where he was a member for over 40 years.

The Hill family built their first home in the Chatham area of Chicago, where Edward and his sisters attended John Marshall Harlan High School. During his time at Harlan, Edward was heavily involved in sports and community activities, and in his senior year he was Prom King for the Harlan class of 1976.

Edward matriculated to Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA where he earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration in 1980. After graduating college, he attended Roosevelt University Chicago, where he received his Master of Public Administration in 1982 with a concentration in Health Administration.

He became a professional healthcare administrator at various facilities throughout the City of Chicago, including, Executive Director of Provident Hospital, Manager of the Eye Care Physician & Surgeons of Illinois Ltd, Administrator of the Harvey Medical Family Medical Center, Executive Director of the Dorothy Rivers Family Women Shelter and the Claude W.B. Holman Komed Health Facility. He also

served as an adjunct-lecturer at Chicago State University and Malcolm X City College where he taught courses in Business Management.

Edward was a true sportsman and enjoyed playing baseball as an outfielder with the Tuley Park Little League Association. He played basketball with the Avalon YMCA, and was an avid league bowler at each of his parent businesses, Halsted Bowl and Skyway Bowl. Edward was also a great tennis player.

Known for his jokes and comical character, he was always the life of every party. He was a proud father, and one of his greatest joys was the birth of his son, Edward, Jr.

Edward had a big heart and was a joy to his family and friends. He made his transition on Thursday, February 11, 2021, at 11:31 p.m. Edward was preceded in death by his father, Johnnie Edward, and his older brother, Johnnie, Jr. He is survived by his beloved mother, Mary Frances; son, Edward, Jr.; mother of his son, Jessie Maroy; sisters, Brunetta Ann Hill Corley (Rico) and Marilyn Frances Booker; aunts, Joan Hill of Chicago, IL and Viola Daniel of Valley Grande, AL, and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

To the Hill family, my deepest condolences, and thoughts during this transition period. I am always reminded of these words in time of grief, "May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face. And rains fall soft upon your fields. And until we meet again, May God hold you in the hollow of His hand."

HONORING TWO RIVERS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL 7TH GRADERS, TEACHERS AND THEIR OUT- STANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, February is Black History month. This month, and every month, let us celebrate the Black Americans who built this nation, amplify the voices of those who continue to fight for a more just society, and recommit to taking real action. We must remember that Black History is American History as we reflect on the people who have strengthened our nation.

This past year, the fight for racial justice was especially important in wake of unspeakable tragedies like the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. People of all ages protested from coast to coast, calling for justice, saying enough is enough, and demanding change. I was particularly inspired by a group of young students led by Social Studies Teacher Nicole Clark, English Language Arts Teacher Monica Powell, and Inclusion Specialist Courtney Legg at Two Rivers Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. During their recent school showcase they presented their "resistance poems" which I have shared with my colleagues in an e-booklet and posted to my website at: <https://delauro.house.gov/sites/delauro.house.gov/files/documents/TwoRiversPoems.pdf>.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." During these unprecedented times, where we are also struggling to

combat a pandemic that is disproportionately affecting communities of color, we must have the courage to make meaningful change. It is clear that the young authors of these poems certainly have that courage. I was particularly inspired by their words, and I am confident that my colleagues in the Congress were as well.

It is through their dedication and commitment of young people—and that of so many others before them—we are able to continue this fight for equality, justice and opportunity today and for many years to come.

RECOGNIZING BLACK HISTORY MONTH ESSAY CONTEST WINNER SHEA DOWLING

HON. A. DONALD McEACHIN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 26, 2021

Mr. McEACHIN. Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the exemplary work of Shea Dowling, an 8th grade student at Albert Hill Middle School in Richmond, Virginia, and the middle school winner of the Black History Month essay contest I hosted earlier this month. Mr. Dowling wrote a superb essay on the presidency of Barack Obama and the positive impact it has left on African-Americans. I am inspired by the words of Mr. Dowling, and I encourage young people across our country to reflect on what this month means to them.

Since its creation less than 50 years ago, Black History Month has been a time to honor and reflect upon the remarkable achievements of the African-American community.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Shea Dowling's exceptional work in celebration of Black History Month.

As the first Black President, Barack Obama is an important figure in Black history. His 2008 election set the record for the most votes ever cast, recently surpassed by Biden in this election. He was a good President in the eyes of many during his two terms. He fought the 2008 recession and helped pass the Affordable Care Act. He also repealed Don't Ask Don't Tell which allowed the LGBTQ+ community serve openly in the military. He set in motion the opportunity for gays to marry. Obama also signed the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which helped lessen the wage gap between genders.

Throughout Obama's campaign and presidency, he faced discrimination and people calling him and his family names. People did different things, such as they called his wife, Michelle Obama, a man. The birther movement started, where people questioned the legitimacy of Obama's birth certificate.

A number of Black leaders inspired our country and paved the way for Obama's success; including MLK, Jesse Jackson, John Lewis, and Shirley Chisholm. However, seeing a Black President for eight years, the majority of my childhood has shown my classmates that they, too, can be anything they want—even President. Obama's presidency has ushered in the success of other Black leaders nationally including Kamala Harris, Kwanza Hall, and Jamaal Bowman.

Electing a Black leader to the highest position of power in our country is a step in the right direction, but we have a long ways to go to become a truly equal nation with equal rights and equal opportunities for all. We have to stand together, united against racism and discrimination. We have to continue

teaching both the good and the ugly of history, we have to look beyond mean words and ways to divide us. We need to teach people to stop looking at one another as strangers, but instead, to look at them as friends and get to know what is inside of others. Together, we can carry Obama's legacy forward, continue to elevate Black voices and Black leaders, and move forward as a country that knows our differences—the many voices we bring to the table—is what makes us unique as a country.